

In flight, long pointed wings, shallow tail fork and a grey-brown underwing.

### First accepted record

The record was accepted as the first Plain Martin *R. p. paludicola* for Seychelles by SBRC. To identify the subspecies, members of SBRC checked the photograph and description against specimens at The Natural History Museum, Tring. Nine subspecies of Plain Martin are recognised, six of which breed in mainland Africa, one in Madagascar and two in southern Asia (Turner 2004). Of the African subspecies, only the partial migrant *R. p. paludicola* of eastern and southern Africa might be considered likely to reach Seychelles. The Madagascar subspecies *R. p. cowani* is a potential vagrant to Seychelles. *R. p. chinensis*, breeding from Afghanistan east to Indochina and Taiwan is a migrant in the north of its range and also a potential vagrant to Seychelles.

The Seychelles bird closely resembled the Asian race *R. p. chinensis*, which has extensive white underparts. *R. p. cowani*, which has all-dark underparts, was easily eliminated. *R. p. paludicola* has white underparts, but less extensive than shown in the photograph, even in the most extreme examples held at Tring. However, given the degree of variability, it was considered that it could not be ruled out entirely. SBRC noted that an Asian origin was probable given the influx of Eurasian migrants to Seychelles at this same time, including unusually large numbers of Blue-checked Bee-eaters, with which the Plain Martin was associated. The Seychelles bird was therefore

considered to be probably *R. p. chinensis*, but with the proviso that other races, notably *R. p. paludicola*, could not be ruled out. There are no other reports of this subspecies in the African region, nor any south of the equator.

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## Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* on Gough Island, South Atlantic

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**Un Albatros de Salvin *Thalassarche salvini* à l'Île de Gough, Atlantique du sud.** Un Albatros de Salvin *Thalassarche salvini* adulte a été observé à Richmond Hill, Île de Gough, le 21 octobre 2008. Ceci constitue la première mention pour l'Atlantique Sud central.

**O**n 21 October 2008 an adult Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* was observed at Richmond Hill, Gough Island, in the central South Atlantic (Figs. 1–2). It was loafing next to

an incubating Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *T. chlororhynchos*. The bulk of the population of *T. salvini* breeds on the Bounty and Snares, two of New Zealand's subantarctic island groups, but a



**Figure 1.** Adult Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* with an Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *T. chlororhynchos*, Gough Island, South Atlantic, 21 October 2008 (Paul Visser)

Albatros de Salvin *Thalassarche salvini* adulte avec un Albatros à bec jaune *T. chlororhynchos*, Île de Gough, Atlantique du sud, 21 octobre 2008 (Paul Visser)



**Figure 2.** Adult Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini*, showing the diagnostic grey head and dark tip to the lower mandible, Gough Island, South Atlantic, 21 October 2008 (Paul Visser)

Albatros de Salvin *Thalassarche salvini* adulte, Île de Gough, Atlantique du sud, 21 octobre 2008 (Paul Visser). Noter la tête grise et la pointe foncée de la mandibule inférieure, qui sont diagnostiques.

few pairs also nest on Île des Pingouins, in the Crozet archipelago, in the south-west Indian Ocean (Brooke 2004). Non-breeding birds typically disperse from New Zealand across the South Pacific to the west coast of South America (Brooke 2004), with a few birds dispersing as far as the Drake Passage and south-west Atlantic, apparently after rounding Cape Horn (Tickell 2000). One was recently observed ashore at the Diego Ramírez Islands, south of Cape Horn (Arata 2003) and there is a recent record from the Patagonian Shelf (Seco Pon *et al.* 2007). *Contra* to early reports (e.g. Harrison 1983), it is a rare vagrant to southern African waters, with only a few sightings from the Western Cape, South Africa (Hockey *et al.* 2005). Salvin's Albatross is part of the Shy Albatross *T. cauta* (*sensu lato*) species complex. Shy Albatrosses occur occasionally in the waters off Tristan (Ryan 2007), but this is the first record of a Salvin's Albatross for the central South Atlantic.

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